

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 MCT-01 DHA-02 AID-05

CCO-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 SP-02 OC-06

OPR-02 PA-01 USSS-00 PRS-01 SCA-01 A-01 OMB-01

SS-15 SY-05 FBO-02 SCS-03 IO-13 CU-02 /094 W

-----310832Z 084294 /17

O 310708Z MAR 77

FM AMCONSUL KARACHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1537

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL LAHORE IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L KARACHI 1521

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PK, PINT

SUBJECT: POLITICAL DEMONSTRATIONS IN KARACHI

REF: KARACHI 1516

1. SUMMARY: THE VIOLENT DEMONSTRATION AGAINST THE CONVENING OF THE PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY MARCH 30 GREW OUT OF PROTEST PROCESSIONS AND RALLIES STAGED BY WOMEN, LAWYERS, ULEMA AND STUDENTS. THE POLICE USED TEARGAS, LATHIS AND GUNFIRE. FOUR PERSONS ARE OFFICIALLY ACKNOWLEDGED TO HAVE BEEN WOUNDED. THE CURFEW IN WEST KARACHI CONTINUES BUT THERE ARE OFFICIAL HOPES THAT IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO LIFT IT WITHIN THREE TO FOUR DAYS. END SUMMARY

2. THE PNA DEMONSTRATION AGAINST THE CONVENING OF THE "UNCONSTITUTIONAL" SIND PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY MARCH 30 CULMINATED IN CLASHES BETWEEN THE SECURITY FORCES AND 2,000 OR MORE DEMOSTRATORS WHICH PERSISTED UNTIL LATE AFTERNOON. FOUR SEPARATE INITIATIVES WERE INVOLVED:

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A. A WOMEN'S PROCESSION OF ABOUT 500. OUR REPORTS INDICATE THAT NO FORCE WAS USED AGAINST THE WOMEN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE AUTHORITIES, BUT THEY WERE PHYSICALLY BARRED FROM PROCEEDING TO THE ASSEMBLY BUILDING. THEY WERE AFFECTED BY TEARGAS APPARENTLY USED AGAINST STUDENTS WHO ATTEMPTED TO ADVANCE SCREENED BY THE WOMEN.

B. A LAWYERS PROCESSION OF SEVERAL HUNDRED WHICH, THOUGH ESCORTED BY THE POLICE AND THE ARMY, WAS NOT DISPERSED BUT WAS ALLOWED TO PROCEED PEACEFULLY TO THE HIGH COURT BUILDING, ITS DESTINATION. THE LAWYERS PAUSED FROM PLACE TO PLACE FOR SPEECHES DENOUNCING THE MARCH 7 ELECTION AND OTHER RESTRICTIONS SUCH AS THE EMERGENCY, CONTROL OF THE PRESS, ETC.

C. A PROCESSION OF ULEMA, SAID BY THE PRESS TO NUMBER 500. SOME 50 OF THE LEADERS WERE ARRESTED WHEN THEY FAILED TO DISPERSE AT POLICE ORDER. TEARGAS WAS USED TO BREAK UP THE REMAINDER OF THE PROCESSION.

D. AN ATTEMPT TO INVADE THE ASSEMBLY BUILDING FROM ALL SIDES BY A LARGE AND VARIED GROUP, INCLUDING MANY STUDENTS. (THIS IS THE FIRST TIME ORGANIZED STUDENT GROUPS HAVE PARTICIPATED AS SUCH TO A SIGNIFICANT DEGREE IN PNA DEMONSTRATIONS IN KARACHI.) IT WAS THIS UNDIFFERENTIATED BODY OF DEMONSTRATORS THAT PRECIPITATED THE CLASHES WITH THE SECURITY FORCES.

3. THE POLICE MADE EXTENSIVE USE OF TEARGAS AND LATHI CHARGES AND ULTIMATELY RESORTED TO GUNFIRE TO HALT AND DISPERSE THE DEMONSTRATORS. AS BEST WE CAN DETERMINE, THE ARMY WAS INVOLVED IN THE ACTION ONLY TO THE EXTENT OF MAINTAINING A DEFENSIVE POSTURE. RUMORS AND SOME NEWSPAPER STORIES CLAIM FROM ONE TO SIX DEATHS, BUT CONFIDENTIAL

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THE COMMISSIONER OF KARACHI DECLARES THAT NONE WAS KILLED AND ONLY FOUR WERE WOUNDED. HE ADDS THAT A DISTRICT MAGISTRATE WAS PRESENT AT THE SCENE AND AUTHORIZED THE FIRING.

4. THE CURFEW REMAINS IN EFFECT IN PARTS OF WEST KARACHI MARCH 31 BUT WAS LIFTED THIS MORNING FROM 0530 TO 0930 AND WILL BE LIFTED THIS AFTERNOON FROM 1400 TO 1900. THE COMMISSIONER OF KARACHI TOLD ME PRIVATELY TODAY THAT DESPITE YESTERDAY'S EVENTS HE HAS HOPES THAT THE CURFEW CAN BE PERMANENTLY LIFTED WITHIN THREE OR FOUR DAYS. THE AUTHORITIES ARE ANXIOUS TO LIFT IT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE FOR SEVERAL REASONS, ONE BEING THE INCREASING DISRUPTION OF BUSINESS ACTIVITY WHICH HAS RESULTED IN HARDSHIP FOR DAILY WAGE EARNERS AS WELL AS SPOT COMMODITY SHORTAGES AND RISING PRICES.
MOORE

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Message Attributes

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Sent Date: 31-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
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